

**COMMISSION ON AGING
MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES
April 28, 2016**

Members Present	Members Absent
Bonnie Klem	Sue Guenther
Charles Kauffman	Noelle Heyman, attending County Council Meeting
Helen Abrahams	John Honig
Isabelle Schoenfeld	Richard Jourdenais
Miriam Keltz	Judith Peres
Judith Levy	Grace Whipple
Douglas Newton	Syed Yusef
Rudolph Oswald	
Mary Petrizzo	Alumni members
Revathi Vikram	Morton Davis
Paul Del Ponte	Beth Shapiro
Karen Maricheau	Marcia Pruzan
Jerry Morenoff	
Barbara Multz	Guests
Stephanie Edelstein	Brian Frosh, Maryland Attorney General
Morton Faller	Debbie Feinstein, Chief, Family Violence Division, State's Attorney's Office
Hileia Seeger	Kelly Davis, State's Attorney's Office
Tammy Duell	Marcy Frosh
David Denton	Diane Kavanaugh
Monica Schaeffer	Tony Edgehill, Director, Damascus Senior Center
Amoke Alakoye	
	Liaisons
	Phil Smakula, Montgomery County Department of Recreation
	James Campbell, Commission on Veterans Affairs
	Alan Kaplan, Commission on Health
	Jim Resnick, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services
	Sarah Gotbaum, Elder Women's Aging Alliance
	Staff
	Tremayne Jones, Department of Health & Human Services
	Pazit Aviv, Department of Health & Human Services
	Fiona Graham, Department of Health & Human Services

CoA Chair Noelle Heyman was unable to attend the meeting, as she was representing the CoA in a Council budget meeting. 1st Vice-Chair Isabelle Schoenfeld opened the meeting at 9:30 am. Isabelle welcomed and introduced Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh.

Attorney General Frosh discussed several consumer protection issues and initiatives. He noted that while not all are limited to seniors, they all affect seniors. They include:

- IRS Services Scam

This telephone scam involves a phone call from someone purporting to be from the IRS, threatening arrest for nonpayment of taxes, and demanding access to the individual's bank accounts or to have money wired. The caller is NOT from the United States Internal Revenue Service. Scammers such as these use untraceable off-shore phone numbers routed through local or other U.S. numbers. Information about this scam is on the IRS website.

- Financial exploitation of seniors.

During the past 10 years, there have been more than 800 million incidents of theft of personal information. Seniors are exploited to the point of 2.9 billion dollars every year. Thieves increasingly steal the identities of children, because children are unlikely to be applying for credit, so the theft will go undetected for many years. In 2012, Maryland became the first state in the nation to give parents or guardians the ability to freeze a child's credit so that the child is not victimized before he or she turns 18. Mr. Frosh recommended reviewing credit reports annually, and placing a security freeze on your report as well as those of minor children and grandchildren.

Information about identity theft, and security or credit freezes, and links to the credit reporting agencies, is on the Maryland Attorney General's website, www.oag.state.md.us.

- Elder Justice Task Force to Protect Maryland Senior Citizens.

The Office of the Attorney General office has joined a new federal-state initiative to protect Maryland's senior citizens through more aggressive enforcement of nursing home abuse and other elder abuse cases. The Elder Justice Task Force, part of the U.S. Department of Justice's Elder Justice Initiative, includes federal, state and local prosecutors, law enforcement and agencies that provide services to the elderly, with the goal of coordinating and enhancing enforcement efforts. Nursing home residents are among the most vulnerable and deserve the strongest protection. This task force will help ensure that seniors are protected, and it sends the message to nursing homes and facilities that substandard care is unacceptable. The task force includes representatives from U.S. Attorneys' Offices, state Medicaid Fraud Control Units, state and local prosecutors' offices, the Department of Health and Human Services, state Adult Protective Services agencies, Long-Term Care Ombudsman programs and law enforcement. In the Maryland Office of the Attorney General, resources will be provided by the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit. Information on the Elder Justice Initiative is at: www.justice.gov/elderjustice.

- Structured Settlement Reform Bill, HB 535/SB 734

The bill, passed by the General Assembly, creates important new safeguards for injured Marylanders who face possible exploitation when offered immediate cash in exchange for future payments obtained through the settlement of a personal injury lawsuit. Those payments are known as structured settlements. An industry has developed to purchase these funds for substantially less than their market value. The offers are targeted to the vulnerable populations who receive these payments, such as young Baltimore victims of lead-paint poisoning.

- **SB 771, Consumer Debt Collection Actions**

The General Assembly also passed a bill supported by Attorney General Frosh that ensures that proper and sufficient documentation is presented in court to prevent inappropriate debt collection actions. SB 771 bars collection actions after the statute of limitations has expired, and requires that third-party debt buyers present certain documents to obtain a court-ordered collection action, including evidence of the agreement between the original creditor and debtor and documents establishing the debt buyer's ownership of the account.

Discussion following Mr. Frosh's presentation included these topics and issues:

The General Assembly passed HB 718, giving the Attorney General authority to file civil actions to recover property in cases of elder exploitation. Mr. Frosh described this new law as potentially very useful, but observed that his office does not have the resources to litigate all cases. They experienced a 7% cut in funding this year. However, the Consumer Protection Division, which will handle these cases, will litigate those that are most egregious.

Debbie Feinstein, Chief, Family Violence Division, Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office, explained that her office is very short staffed. As a result, they must triage the elder abuse referrals they receive from Adult Protective Services, and also can prosecute only the most egregious cases.

Public education and education of health care providers about financial exploitation is very important. Debbie mentioned the ElderSafe "Red Flags" presentation as an example of an effective campaign.

Members of the immigrant community are receiving telephone calls from fake immigration agents, threatening deportation and demanding money.

Agenda

Introductions and welcome of new commissioners

Isabelle welcomed four of the six new commissioners to the meeting. They each provided a few words about their professional background.

Approval of the minutes

Minutes from the March meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report

The current balance is \$1,952.30.

Age-Friendly Montgomery and the Senior Sub-Cabinet

Isabelle reported that following the last Senior Subcabinet meeting and based on their feedback on the Strategic Planning Workgroup's presentation on a path forward for developing a three-year Strategic Plan, Judy Levy, Chair of the workgroup, sent a letter to Senior Subcabinet Co-Chairs, Uma Ahluwalia and Gabriel Albornoz. The letter discussed the need to align the Senior Subcabinet workgroups and terminology, the Senior Agenda, and recommendations from the Senior Summit, to be sure that they that they are consistent with Age-Friendly language and concepts. It also discussed modifications to the Senior Subcabinet and the workgroups. Directors Ahluwalia and Albornoz responded that the Senior Subcabinet will be reconfigured as the Age-Friendly Montgomery County Advisory Committee (AFMCAC), and expanded to include private sector representatives. Workgroups will also be expanded as appropriate, and will establish action items and performance measures for inclusion in a strategic plan. The Strategic Plan is to be submitted to the County Executive by September.

Summer Studies

Isabelle described the process for selecting 2016 Summer Studies. The Public Policy (PPC) and Health and Wellness Committees will be proposing summer studies. As of this date, PPC is considering summer studies on hoarding, transportation for seniors and people with disabilities, and gap needs that prevent seniors from aging in place. Health and Wellness is planning to propose a summer study on the expansion of dental care for seniors.

Legislative Update and County Council Visits - Rudy Oswald and Doug Newton

COA testimony on state bills

HB 718: Asset Recovery for Exploited Seniors Act.[passed]
SB 336/HB 1277: Hospitals–Designation of Lay Caregivers (CARE Act). [passed]
SB 472/HB580: Healthy Working Families Act. The bill passed the House; Senate referred the bill to Finance Committee. No further action.

COA Letters on State Bills

HB 495: Offense Against Vulnerable/Elderly Adults. Unfavorable report.
HB 244: Closure of Assisted Living Facilities. Bill withdrawn; issues will be handled through regulation.
SB 98: Senior Center Activities Operating Fund. [passed]
SB 805/HB 262: Increased Funding for Senior Centers: funding raised. [passed]
HB 685 State Department of Aging comprehensive plan. Unfavorable report.
S SB 819/HB 316: Independent Living Tax Credit Act. Letter sent there were no votes.
B 242/HB 886: Telemedicine. [passed]

Doug reported on the recent meetings with members of the County Council, at which Commission members presented the CoA's budget priorities and discussed issues of

interest to Councilmembers. Some councilmembers requested additional information. Councilmember Berliner asked for additional information about the Caregiver Support Program. Two councilmembers mentioned Transportation and Affordable Housing as issues and opportunities for next year. Councilmember Hucker's legislative aide Andrea Nunez (who represented Mr. Hucker at the meeting) would like information about Commission activities in East County. Councilmember Leventhal mentioned his support for the Design for Life Program to improve accessibility.

Councilmember Leventhal also suggested that the CoA meet with Linda McMillian. Isabelle, John, Chuck, and Doug met with Ms. McMillan on April 25th.

Councilmember Riemer mentioned that the focus of the budget was on the youth. It was stated that a "zone tax" amendment will be introduced. Councilmember Elrich asked about data such as county senior demographics, number of seniors below median income, and the number of people served and on wait-list for adult foster care. Judy said that Roger Berliner is also interested in food insecurity on the part of seniors in the county.

Seniors Today

The April taping, to be broadcast in May, includes a focus on Heritage Montgomery, the Design for Living tax credit program, and the Maryland Senior Olympics.

Other Announcements

Isabelle congratulated Sarah Gotbaum on receiving the Neal Potter Path of Achievement Award. Sarah has devoted her life to working professionally as a volunteer on behalf of women, equality, and aging issues. A ceremony will be held on May 2, 2016 at 6:00pm at Imagination Stage in Bethesda, where awards will be presented to Sarah and the other recipients.

Liaison Updates

Department of Recreation. Phil Smakula reported that the Countywide Recreation Advisory Board that meets the 1st Monday of every month from 7-9 pm. Phil ask if there was anyone who would like to represent the COA. This Board advises the County Executive, County Council, Montgomery County Recreation and the planning board on county recreation and park needs. Phil also announced upcoming events: (1) City of Gaithersburg 8th Annual Active Aging Expo, May 2, 9am to 2pm, Activity Center at Bohrer Park; (2) Senior Tech Fair, May 11, 10am-1pm, Holiday Park Senior Center; and (3) White Oak Senior Center's 23rd Annual Senior Health and Fitness Day, May 25, 10am-1pm, featuring fitness walk, healthy cooking demo, senior fitness screenings, and healthy snack options.

Commission on Veterans Affairs. James Campbell informed the CoA that the VA is exploring options for locating a health clinic in the western area of the county.

Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services. Jim Resnick recently collaborated with Meals on Wheels in Chevy Chase to visit 40 homes occupied by seniors. They found at least half of the homes had no working smoke alarms. He and his colleagues installed

about 50 smoke alarms. Jim is always on the lookout for more opportunities to do outreach. He will be giving a presentation to the CoA Communications Committee in May.

Keeping Seniors Safe (KSS). Morton Davis explained that Keeping Seniors Safe (KSS) was developed in conjunction with the Volunteer Resources Section of the Montgomery County Police Department. The KSS program was established to increase awareness of safety issues among seniors, and to provide guidance and resources to seniors about these issues. KSS representatives speak on the following safety topics:

- Safe shopping habits and parking lot safety
- Home safety and personal preparedness for an emergency
- Fraud and scams
- Identity theft identification and prevention
- Who to call for emergency and non-emergency needs

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am.

Respectfully Submitted
Stephanie Edelstein, Secretary